



# 2024 WEF FELLOWS

## BIOGRAPHIES

The WEF Fellows program, much like Fellows programs at universities and other professional trade associations, was created to recognize WEF members with outstanding achievement and impactful contributions to the water industry. Criteria was established in 2009 to recognize individual WEF member's professional achievement, stature, and contributions towards the preservation and enhancement of the global water environment in design/consulting, education, operations, regulation, research and utility management/leadership, as well as, importantly, their service to WEF and respective Member Associations. The prestigious title of “WEF Fellow” is awarded on a selective basis after a thorough application review process. Over a decade after its inaugural year, 195 of WEF’s best and brightest have been recognized as a “WEF Fellow”.

The following 15 WEF Members have been selected as Fellows in 2024 for their lasting difference for public health and the environment.



## **Paul T. Bowen, Ph.D.**

**Georgia Water Environment Association, Water Environment Association of South Carolina**

Paul Bowen's long and distinguished career has had an international impact in both water treatment and wastewater treatment. His career includes contributions to academia, municipal and industrial treatment applications, and professional organizations.

Paul Earned his Ph.D. in Environmental Systems Engineering from Clemson University in 1982. For the next seven years he served as Assistant Professor in the School of Civil Engineering and Environmental Science at the University of Oklahoma. He spent the next ten years with the consulting firm of Metcalf & Eddy, rising to the position of Vice President.

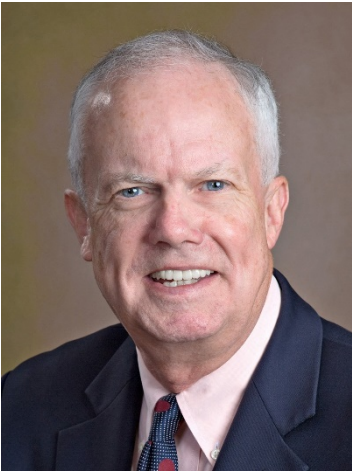
Paul spent the next 24 years as a leader in water treatment and wastewater treatment for Coca-Cola. In this role he provided expertise to facilities across the globe. He implemented diverse technologies for improving water quality and sustainability at company owned and third party water and wastewater treatment systems. His work has impacted water reuse efforts in Latin America, North America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. He has engaged in design, operation, and research. The scope of his activities encompassed leadership of design teams, analysis of problems, research into innovative solutions, operations, and management of facilities. He has excelled in educating and guiding young professionals.

His list of publications is impressive, with topics that range from MBR technology to sludge handling. Paul developed an international reputation as a speaker, educating audiences on sustainability and stewardship of our water resources. His work has been presented to IAW, AWWA, and WEF, including presentations at WEFTEC and several WEF Member Associations.

Paul was a founder of the Beverage Industry Environmental Roundtable (BIER), a group of leading beverage companies discussing sustainability issues, and has helped guide their efforts in sustainable water issues.

Paul has served the members of WEF for decades. His roles include:

- Membership and leadership of several committees, including:
  - Literature Review
  - Stockholm Junior Water Prize
  - Scholarship Advisory Committee
  - Program Committee
  - Member of program committees for multiple symposia: Biosolids, Research, and Industrial Wastes
  
- Member of the Board of Trustees
- President of the Board of Trustees



## **Joseph G. Cleary, P.E., BCEE**

### **New York Water Environment Association**

Joseph Cleary's exemplary career as an expert in industrial waste treatment and water quality spans six decades. He sat at the feet of the most highly respected leaders in our field, and earned a reputation for passing along their servant spirit and the insights he learned from them. He is highly respected by both his peers and his proteges, who awarded him WEF's W. Wesley Eckenfelder Award in 2012.

Joe has always exhibited the greatest breadth of communication and collaboration. He has demonstrated the depth of technical insight to analyze complex wastewater challenges, meet them at the level of scientific fundamentals, and communicate effectively with both academics and practical facility operators.

Mr. Cleary's service to both Water Environment Federation and the Member Association has extended through his entire career. Joe has led and coordinated the technical committees, and earned a reputation for effective technical leadership, as he repeatedly organized the efforts of a team, bringing growth and opportunity to newcomers and effectively distributing workload to achieve excellent programs.

People who have worked side-by-side with Cleary speak of his dedication to productive partnering, his attention to detail, his command of both the fundamentals and of emerging concepts and processes, and his determination to support classical and innovative thinking and investigation.

Joe Cleary's application for WEF Fellow was supported by numerous letters from highly respected water quality champions, including two past presidents of the organization, accomplished cohorts he has mentored, and business associates who have witnessed his continued fairmindedness and dedication to productive collaboration.

Among Joe's accomplishments are leadership and participation in innumerable conference presentations, seminars, workshops and educational events, authorship and editorship of seminal volumes on industrial waste treatment and development of analytical methods and treatment processes.

Joseph Cleary was named a Fellow of WEF in the tradition of high moral character, unselfish advancement of the environmental engineering and water profession and the admiration and respect of his peers.



**Dr. Christian Davies-Venn, Ph.D., P.E., BCEE, BCWRE, F. ASCE**

**Chesapeake Water Environment Association,  
Federal Water Quality Association**

Dr. Christian Davies-Venn has been a dedicated practitioner of wastewater engineering that has included facilities planning, design, operation and maintenance program and construction management of a range of handling systems for more than 40 years. Christian is a Board-Certified Environmental Engineer with 46 years of experience, with 25 of those years in senior management positions in a broad variety of activities spanning many aspects of environmental engineering. Since 2019, he has been a life member of WEF in good standing and is also a member of AWWA and AAEES. I personally conferred upon Christian the

distinction of the FWQA Select Society of Sanitary Sludge Shoveler's Award (SS) in 2008.

WEF has previously recognized Christian for his outstanding performance and contribution to the profession. He is the recipient of the Water Environment Federation's William D. Hatfield Award in 2011 for outstanding performance and professionalism. The recipient has contributed to the dissemination of information concerning advancements in the field of operations.

Christian has served as Vice President and Chief Engineer with PEER Consultants in Washington, DC, as well as Director of Water and Wastewater (WW) engineering with PEER Consultants in Rockville, MD over the past two decades, as well as a senior project engineer and development manager with Parsons in Fairfax, VA. He also has international experience as an engineer in Freetown, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Gambia that were sponsored and funded by the World Bank, the European Economic Community, and the African Development Bank in a variety of engineering studies and designs of civil, structural, bridge design, commercial building and highway development projects.

Christian is and has been a lecturer since 2010 at the Johns Hopkins University Whiting School of Engineering in Baltimore, MD. He has taught graduate level courses in environmental engineering, including principles of water and wastewater (WW) treatment, water supply and WW collection as well as WW treatment plant design. Christian has authored or co-authored over 20 peer-reviewed papers, presentations, and journal articles dealing with a wide range of WW treatment, including odor control, biosolids, nutrient removal, emissions testing at sludge management facilities, anaerobic processes, pressure filtration and other related topics.

Christian is Past President of the American Academy of Environmental Engineers & Scientists (AAEES), and is an active life member of this organization, having served in numerous capacities in AAEES since 2006. Christian is an active Life Member since 2019 of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) and a Member of the National Capital Section of ASCE. He is a member of the executive committee of the Council of Engineering and Scientific Specialty Boards from 2005 to the present, having served also as a member of the Accreditation and Admissions Committee and Chair of the Graduate Engineer Certification Committee, as well as a Chair of the Professional Engineer Specialty Certification Committee.

Christian is a leader in the FWQA, having served these past three years as its' President, guiding the organization through the challenging times of the COVID-19 Health Pandemic, as it ran nearly all our activities virtually from 2020 through 2023. Christian is also a member of the FWQA Scholarship Committee, a FWQA Judge at the regional science fairs, a Water Quality Instructor and a helpful presence at nearly every event of the FWQA. Christian is also a member of the Residuals and Biosolids Committee of the Chesapeake Water Environment Association (CWEA), a MA of WEF.

He is a nationally recognized expert in process modeling, enhanced nutrient removal and anaerobic processes, and biosolids management. His technical abilities are well documented and he is an asset to the profession. His technical expertise and experience are impressive, acknowledged by the view of his peers at the value of his input and involvement in a wastewater engineering project.

While his technical achievements are significant, his contributions to the development of WEF Member Associations and especially young professionals is even more noteworthy. Christian has served in many roles for FWQA including currently in the position of President. Many members of WEF state their intentions to support the development of young professionals within the profession, however, Christian actually invests the time and effort to make it happen.

Christian invests personal time to engage and support young members in beginning their involvement in FWQA and WEF and other aspects of their careers. In his various roles on the Board of Directors for FWQA he always focuses the conversation on how we can engage and support young professionals to enhance the organization. Christian's ability to serve as a mentor to young professionals is admirable and serves as a model for other WEF member associations.



## **Christine deBarbadillo**

### **Chesapeake Water Environment Association**

Christine is well known and respected in our industry as an innovator and collaborator. Chris has worked as a consultant and for a large utility as an innovation leader for over 30 years. She previously served as the director for Black & Veatch's Wastewater Treatment Technology Department and is currently serving as Black & Veatch's Plant Optimization Practice Leader. As a process engineer, Chris performed detailed assessments for over fifty wastewater treatment facilities to optimize performance and develop upgrade strategies, with many of them focused on achieving stringent nutrient limits. Chris is a professional Engineer in Virginia and Delaware

and holds an ABC Class IV Wastewater Operator license.

Chris recently worked for nine years at a large Utility where she focused on commissioning, operations training, and optimization of advanced biosolids processes, nutrient removal to stringent limits, and sidestream deammonification processes along with research and development efforts oriented toward next-generation process improvements. She is well versed in conventional and developing processes and has a keen interest in integrating biosolids and liquid stream processes for optimal performance.

Chris is an active member of WEF and the North Carolina One Water member association. She has served on the steering committee or as chair for numerous WEF conferences and symposiums including the WEF Innovations in Process Engineering Conference in 2022, the WEF Specialty Conference on Nutrient Removal and Recovery in 2016, the James Barnard Emerging Trends in Phosphorus Removal and Recovery in 2019, WEF Specialty Conference on Nutrient Removal in 2008 and 2011, and the WEF/IWA Specialty Conference on Nutrient Removal and Recovery in 2013, just to name a few. She also served on the WEF Plant Operations and Maintenance Committee and the WEFTEC Program Committee from 2006 to 2022.

Chris has also contributed to several WEF books including the WEF Manual of Practice (MOP) 30 Biological Nutrient Removal Operation in Wastewater Treatment Plants, MOP 35 Biofilm Reactors, and MOP 8 Design of Water Resource Recovery Facilities. Additionally, she has served as technical practice committee liaison for the Municipal Design Committee for several WEF publications including Grit Removal, Nutrient Roadmap, and Short-cut Nutrient Removal.

She has authored or co-authored a significant number of papers and presented at numerous conferences on a variety of topics such as biological nutrient removal, fermentation, treatment of return streams from thermal hydrolyses plants, short-cut denitrification and especially on denitrification filters. In 2004, Chris and several colleagues were awarded the WEF George Bradley Gascoigne medal for a paper detailing solutions to biological phosphorus removal operations issues.



## **John K. Esler, P.E.**

### **New England Water Environment Association**

John Esler's career spans over 60 years and he has long been recognized as a leading technical expert in clarifier design, operation, and optimization. John has served as the design associate on civil engineering projects, project manager on construction projects, Section Chief for New York State – Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS-DEC's) certification, training and technical assistance program, and the Director of O&M on a large international wastewater treatment project. In 1989, John founded his clarifier consulting company, Clarifier Performance Evaluations, Inc. Over the course of his career, John has directly tested and made recommendations to improve the operation of hundreds of clarifiers in the United States and Canada. In

conjunction with his work at the Los Angeles Hyperion facility, he was part of the development of the Los Angeles Energy-Dissipating Inlet (LA-EDI). Although the original patent on the LA-EDI (US Patent Ser. No. US 6,276,537 B1) has expired, this EDI is still used by many clarifier designers today and has greatly improved clarifier performance.

For well over 50 years, John has been a member of and volunteered for WEF, NYWEA and NEWEA to educate wastewater professionals to get improved performance from their clarifiers. John has been an active member of the WEF Plant Operations and Maintenance Committee (PMOC) and the Industrial Waste Committee for many years. He also served as WEF POMC Chair in 1995.

John has contributed to increasing the body of knowledge available to support students, engineers and operators through being an author for numerous books, articles, and papers around clarifier design and performance. While with NYS-DEC, Mr. Esler was a contributor author to the "Ten States Standards for Wastewater Treatment Works". He was also a contributing author to the New England "Guides for the Design of Wastewater Treatment Works" activated sludge chapter, a peer reviewer and contributor to the CSU/Sacramento "Operator Training" series, and a peer reviewer to the EPA manual "Retrofitting POTW's". He was also the lead author for Chapter 7, Field Testing, in the 2005 Edition of WEF's MOP No. FD-8, "Clarifier Design".

John also has presented many technical papers over the years at WEFTEC, Member Associations, and other operator training events. Additionally, from 2003 to 2022, John conducted a clarifier station at the Activated Sludge BNR Hands-on Workshop held at WEFTEC each year. While various rotational stations have come and gone, John's station has been one of the more popular stations in the rotation. This is a tribute to his ability to transmit his knowledge as well as his technical abilities.

John has inspired and educated hundreds, if not thousands, of engineers and operators to put extra emphasis on getting the best possible performance out of the clarifiers they have worked on. John seizes every opportunity to teach and to mentor young professionals entering the wastewater workforce today. John is currently conducting a series of webinars with design engineering firms to share key design insights that he has gleaned from collecting and analyzing performance data from hundreds of clarifiers over the past 35 years. He loves to pass along the lessons he has learned from collecting and analyzing clarifier performance field data. In this way, his positive impact will continue to be realized in the design and operations of our clarifiers in the future.



## **Patricia Kennedy, P.E.**

### **AZ Water Association**

Colleagues describe Patty as a dedicated engineer who is passionate about the water sector as witnessed by her professional and technical contributions in the practice of water and wastewater engineering both as a consulting engineer and as a utility manager and leader for the past 30 years. In her current role as Deputy Director of Wastewater Engineering of the City of Phoenix, AZ, Patty is responsible for the day-to-day functions of the Wastewater Engineering Design and Construction Management Division and manages a CIP of approximately \$124M, providing wastewater service to over 2.5 million customers. Today, the Phoenix Water Services Department is the sixth largest water utility in the

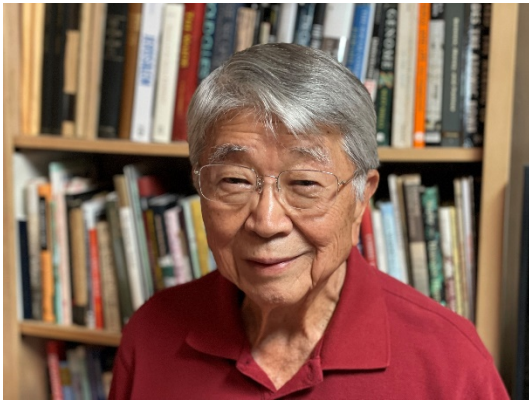
United States, with over 7,000 miles of water lines and 5,000 miles of sewer lines, six water treatment plants, two wastewater treatment plants, including the 230 MGD 91st Ave WWTP (largest in the state), and over a 540 square-mile service area. During her role as the Deputy Director of Wastewater Engineering, there have been numerous successes for both her and her department, that are important contributions to communities served, the water industry, and the profession of Civil Engineering.

One notable achievement credited to the leadership of Patty and her team includes a partnership and investment to provide significant environmental benefits, while adding revenue to the City. As part of her role as the Deputy Director, she serves as a member on the Sub-Regional Operating Group (SROG) Committee of the Joint Municipal Water Reclamation System, which includes the City's 91st Ave WWTP. The SROG cities partnered with Ameresco, a Massachusetts-based energy company, to convert the byproduct methane gas into usable natural gas, or RNG. The Ameresco RNG plant, in operation since 2019, provides over \$1 million in annual revenue for the SROG cities. Approximately 600,000 mmbtu of methane is converted to natural gas which according to Ameresco, saves the equivalent of over 44,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide per year. This project was acknowledged for its significance by the AZ Water Association, as the 2020 Outstanding Sustainability Project of the Year.

Since starting her career in the water sector industry, Patty has been a committed and dedicated leader in AZ Water, WEF and other professional organizations. She has served as Secretary, Treasurer and President and on numerous committees in AZ Water where she was instrumental in the development of long-standing financial procedures and the MA strategic plan. She represented AZ Water as a Delegate to the House of Delegates during 2016-2019 and again as a Delegate at Large from 2019-2022. During her terms as a Delegate, Patty served on the HOD Budget and WEF Audit Committees. It was through Patty's efforts as she served on these financial committees, that the Member Association Grant program was established. The Grant Program provides funding to MA's for a variety of projects that support the MA's and WEF's mission and vision. She also organized two successful WEFMAX meetings in 2012 and 2019. Additionally, she has participated in various ASCE local and regional conferences. Patty volunteers her time to the professional licensing and development for the Civil Engineering Industry, where she has been, and continues to participate with the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES), where she participates in exam development for the FE exam.

Patty is recipient of the 2015 Arthur Sidney Bedell Award, 2015 AZ Water Kachina Award and AZ Water's 2006 Young Professional of the Year. In addition she was recognized in 2021 by the ASCE with the National Government Civil Engineer of the Year.





## **James S. Kumagai, Ph.D., P.E.**

### **Hawaii Water Environment Association**

Considered a “giant” among his peers, Dr. James Kumagai had an extraordinary career impact over more than six decades. He has been a mentor and source of inspiration to many and is seen as a visionary who has been uniquely influential in the fields of water quality protection and land use planning in Hawaii. Leading a wide variety of engineering projects in the public sector, Dr. Kumagai consistently advocated for and practiced “doing the right things for the right reasons” and based on sound science.

After graduating with a BS in civil engineering from the University of Hawaii, Dr. Kumagai began his working life with military service followed by work in engineering, surveying, and teaching positions before he returned to graduate school. He obtained a masters in civil and sanitary engineering from Washington University in St. Louis and a PhD in engineering from Berkeley.

Dr. Kumagai worked for many years as a consulting engineer providing leadership on issues ranging from planning and prioritization, to water resource development and water/wastewater system design, to environmental impact assessment, and marine/industrial discharge management. He also worked for eight years for The Queen’s Medical Center, Honolulu, Hawaii, leading the planning design, and construction of critical elements of this healthcare facility.

Dr. Kumagai is credited with influencing approaches to many of the major water and environmental issues facing Hawaii during his career. In addition to these contributions through his engineering skills and practice, he served for five years as director of environmental programs for the department of health and developed a landmark plan for water quality protection in Hawaii. While he worked on many of the water quality challenges of his generation, his unusual drive and outstanding personal qualities allowed him to influence more than specific projects and to use his respected and authoritative voice for wider positive impact.

Dr. Kumagai’s community service is notable and wide ranging, for example he served on boards or in leadership roles of wide ranging organizations in the health and medical fields and was also chair of the Democratic party in Hawaii from 1980 to 1986. Active in professional organizations, he is a life member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, the American Water Works Association, and the Water Environment Federation. In 2022, he was the recipient of the annual lifetime achievement award from the Hawaii Council of Engineering Societies. An engaged Hawaii Water Environment Association (HWEA) member Dr. Kumagai served on numerous committees and task forces, is a Bedell award recipient, and a past HWEA President.



## **Rebecca Lewis**

### **Kansas Water Environment Association**

Rebecca Lewis is a seasoned professional in the field of wastewater management, bringing over four decades of expertise beginning her career as a Water Laboratory Bacteriologist and then to her role as Wastewater Division Manager. Based in Wichita, Kansas, Rebecca has dedicated her career to ensuring the efficient and sustainable wastewater treatment and utility management for the City of Wichita and her community.

Throughout her tenure, Rebecca has amassed a wealth of experience and garnered numerous accolades for her outstanding contributions to the field. Her commitment to excellence and innovation has not only elevated the standards of wastewater management in Wichita but has also served as a model for other municipalities.

Rebecca's passion for her work is evident in her unwavering dedication to finding solutions to complex challenges in wastewater and utility management. Her leadership has been instrumental in implementing cutting-edge technologies and best practices, resulting in improved efficiency, cost savings, and environmental stewardship.

In recognition of her remarkable achievements, Rebecca has been honored with multiple awards in wastewater management and various association services. These accolades not only acknowledge her professional excellence but also highlight her significant impact on the industry and the community at large.

Beyond her professional endeavors, Rebecca is known for her commitment to community service and environmental advocacy. She actively engages in initiatives aimed at promoting sustainability and environmental conservation, reflecting her deep-rooted values and dedication to making a positive difference in the world.

As Wastewater Division Manager, Rebecca Lewis led with integrity, expertise, and a relentless drive to ensure a cleaner, healthier future for the City of Wichita and beyond.



## **Dave Mason**

### **Water Environment Association of Texas**

Dave Mason has more than 40 years' experience in water and wastewater treatment and management. With a BS degree in aquatic biology from Bowling Green State University in Ohio, Mr. Mason has been certified as a wastewater or water treatment operator in more than a dozen US states, and is also a certified maintenance and reliability professional. He is widely published including in key WEF technical offerings. Mr. Mason's experience has been described as "unique" and is certainly unusually broad ranging. His career includes work in operations, consulting, technology development and deployment in municipal and industrial applications, and roles as a management/business leader. His ability to identify and share meaningful lessons learned between the municipal and industrial sectors has been cited as being especially noteworthy.

Mr. Mason is widely-recognized for the depth of his expertise in wastewater treatment and his superior ability to troubleshoot and solve thorny treatment challenges. His career impact, however, reflects not just the depth of his knowledge and competence but his personal qualities including his approachability and humility. He is valued by his peers for his commitment to go beyond solving problems, to mentor, teach, and develop others, applying "patience" as well as "passion." While Mr. Mason's personal contributions are noteworthy, he is also recognized as a broader advocate for the development of the next generation of operations professionals.

Mr. Mason's volunteer and community service contributions are also impressive. He has been active in the Water Environment Federation (WEF) for more than 30 years as both a consistent, reliable, and hardworking individual contributor and also as an effective leader. His personal contributions include authoring and reviewing WEF manuals of practice and training materials; presenting conference papers and teaching WEFTEC workshops; and supporting operations challenge in a variety of roles. He has been and remains active on a number of WEF technical committees, is a past chair of POMC (plant operations and maintenance committee) and the PDC (professional development committee), and also has been an active contributor to several MAs. In reflecting on Mr. Mason's effectiveness as a volunteer leader, peers have noted his energy and his commitment to encouraging and engaging others as well as his value as a role model.

Mr. Mason is a life member of WEF, of the American Water Works Association (AWWA), and of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. In addition to his extensive WEF contributions, he has volunteered for AWWA, and has served a number of roles with the Boy Scouts of America.



## **David William Oerke, P.E., BCEE**

### **Rocky Mountain Water Environment Association**

David W. Oerke, PE, BCEE, is a distinguished environmental engineer with over 43 years of experience gained by working in municipal agencies and consulting firms specializing in wastewater treatment and biosolids management. Holding a Master of Science in Environmental Engineering from Marquette University and a Bachelor of Science in Civil/Environmental Engineering from the University of Cincinnati, David has developed a profound expertise that has led to his recognition as a national leader in the environmental field.

David's career began with roles such as an Environmental Engineer at Camp Dresser & McKee (now CDM Smith) from 1979 to 1981, where he worked on wastewater treatment plant designs and sewer system evaluations. His early experience laid a strong foundation for his later work, which has consistently demonstrated a commitment to advancing wastewater treatment technologies and processes. Throughout his extensive career, David has managed numerous complex projects, including municipal wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) projects with construction costs ranging from \$10,000 to \$40 million. His role often involved detailed evaluation, quality control review, and innovative design approaches that resulted in significant cost savings and enhanced operational efficiency.

From 2011 to 2016, as a Senior Technology Specialist, David led the quality control review for major projects such as the Northern WWTP for Metro Water Recovery in Brighton, Colorado, a \$250 million project. His expertise in process mechanical design was further demonstrated in his role as a Senior Technologist at the Blue Plains Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant in Washington, DC, where he contributed to a \$750 million project involving advanced dewatering technologies.

David's leadership extended beyond project execution to shaping industry standards and knowledge dissemination. He was the Global Technology Leader of the Jacobs Residuals Resource Recovery Group from 2015 to 2018 and has been a key contributor to influential publications, including the WEF Manual of Practice and the EPA/WEF/WERF Solids Processing Design and Management Manual. His work includes authoring and reviewing critical chapters on stabilization, thickening, and dewatering.

His dedication to the field is also evident in his numerous professional presentations and publications, where he has shared insights on topics like gravity and centrifuge thickening, biosolids dewatering, and energy optimization at water resource recovery facilities. David has presented at prestigious events such as the WEFTEC and WEFBC conferences, reflecting his standing as a thought leader in environmental engineering.

Recognized with multiple awards, David's projects have won accolades such as the AAEE Grand Prize Design - Excellence in Environmental Engineering and Science Awards, the WERF Excellence in Innovation Award, and the DBIA National Awards of Excellence and Merit. These awards highlight the impact and excellence of his contributions to the field.

Based in Greenwood Village, CO, and licensed as a Professional Engineer in multiple states, David continues to influence the field through his work as a Senior Fellow Technologist, Professional Senior Subject Matter Expert, and Vice President at Jacobs Engineering. He is an Eagle Scout; and his involvement with scouting activities in his years of youth surely inculcated the spirit of service to the environmental field by building and working with teams. His career is a testament to his dedication to environmental sustainability and innovative engineering solutions in wastewater treatment and biosolids management.



## **Dr. Ana J. Peña-Tijerina, P.E., BCEE**

### **Water Environment Association of Texas**

Combining technical skills, energy, positivity, and dedication, Ana Peña-Tijerina has helped the water sector and the water quality community grow and innovate and has made WEF and WEAT more effective/impactful organizations. Ana's role model illustrates how, through a diverse water profession, WEF is increasing our collective impact on public health and the water environment.

Ana's impeccable credentials comprise a BS in chemical engineering, an MS in environmental engineering, and a Ph.D. in civil engineering. Ms. Peña-Tijerina is a professional engineer and a Board-Certified Environmental Engineer, a graduate of WEF's Water Leadership Institute, and is now pursuing her Class A Wastewater Operator License. Her 25 years of broad experience include wastewater planning and design engineering, service to an environmental non-profit, academic service

as an adjunct professor and university guest lecturer, and leadership in partnerships between WERF and her water utility. Ana has been a contributing author to a wide array of WEF technical publications dealing with nutrient removal and water resource recovery.

Peña-Tijerina has been a tireless servant of WEF and Member Association WEAT. She has served the organization through the chairs, leading development and execution of numerous workshops, seminars, and conferences. Ana's commitment to lay audiences and school children is exemplified by her service as a judge of the US National Stockholm Junior Water Prize and Fort Worth "Waterama," and her leadership in WEAT's Student Design Competition.

Ms. Peña-Tijerina has proven the value of bridging the gap between managers, engineers, and operators. Nearly ten years as Engineering Manager at a large WRRF gave her an appreciation of the value and perspective of operators that drives her career. Her skill at explaining complex engineering concepts is matched by her commitment to personal action to solve problems, logistical gaps, or unmet needs.

Ana's outreach to water environment policy and the regulatory community has made her a "go to" person for water professionals/organizations seeking to understand the latest developments and implications. She contributed to Texas' development of nutrient criteria and the Texas Surface Water Numeric Nutrient Criteria.

Ana Peña-Tijerina is a truly admirable water professional, subject matter expert and volunteer. In her humility and service, she exemplifies the essence of career impact and volunteerism the WEF Fellows status was developed to recognize.



## **Joseph C. Reichenberger, P.E., BCEE**

### **California Water Environment Association**

Mr. Joseph C. Reichenberger has over 60 years of professional experience in a variety of positions in the field of civil and environmental engineering. After graduating from Marquette University, he began his career in California. He is a registered engineer in five states, and also a certified water treatment plant operator in California. Over the years, he has held multiple positions as a consulting engineer, working on more than 100 wastewater treatment and water plants projects across the country and overseas.

Joseph is also very active with professional organizations, being life members of the American Society of Civil Engineers, American Academy of Environmental Engineers and Scientists, American Water Works Association, and Water Environment Federation.

He has served on multiple committees and also was active in community involvement, having served at the California Association of Sanitation Agencies, San Gabriel Valley Water District, San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority, the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, City of Monterey Park, as well as being a Scout Master. He received the Water Vision Award from his work for the San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water Authority in 1996.

Perhaps the most noted contributions Joseph has made to the field is as an educator. He is a professor at the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department of Loyola Marymount University since 1993. Over the years, he has trained over 400 undergraduate and graduate environmental engineers, most of them now serving in various positions in southern California and elsewhere.

To quote one reference, "his most important achievement in his professional career has been the application of his hard engineering experience to the development of implementation-oriented environmental engineers at the Bachelor's and Master's levels. There is no other educational institution with such a record of accomplishment in Southern California, and meeting the demand for talent and this record exists because of the work and experience of Professor Reichenberger".



## **Matthew Paul Ries, Ph.D., P.E.**

### **Virginia Water Environment Association**

Matthew Ries has 30 years of experience as a professional engineer and five years as a public wastewater utility Director. His experience includes work in the private and public sector with projects in municipal water, wastewater, and stormwater.

Matthew Ries began his career in the water industry working for the City of Elmhurst Department of Public Works as an engineering technician while studying for his Civil Engineering degree at Valparaiso University, in Indiana. He continued his studies at the University of Notre Dame where he completed his Masters in environmental engineering.

Following his Master's degree, Matthew spent almost ten years working for several consulting companies, developing his skills and acquiring experience in the design of several processes. In addition to his design project work, during his time with Hazen and Sawyer, Ecology and Environment, Inc. (now WSP) and Earth Tech, Inc. (now AECOM) he also provided construction management and start-up services as well as operator training and environmental compliance inspection services.

Between 2005 and 2017 Mathhew served as the Chief Technical Officer and Managing Director of Technical & Educational Services for the Water Environment Federation. He managed WEF's Water Science & Engineering Center and Education & Training programs, with budgets over \$4 million and 20 staff. He supervised the development and delivery of WEF's conferences and educational programming, including the WEFTEC technical program and worked with the WEF Board of Trustees, WEF leadership, sector leaders, members, and staff, to develop WEF's Stormwater Institute (2015), WEF's Innovation Program (2011) and WEF's Specialty Conference program.

During his time at WEF he led the creation of programs in new practice areas and championed innovation, while pursuing his Ph.D. research at the University of South Florida on a framework to assess top practices and key attributes of sustainable, U.S. urban water utilities. He served as the primary contact or originator of organizational partnerships and collaborations with the US EPA, NACWA, the Water Research Foundation, the Johnson Foundation at Wingspread and The Alliance for Water Stewardship.

Following his significant contributions to WEF, Mathhew sought a new challenge with DC Water. Over the last six years he has held a variety of technical, managerial, and leadership roles at DC Water with a focus on strategy, performance, and sustainability. His current role is that of Vice President (Strategy and Performance). In this role he oversees the Enterprise Performance Management Office (EPMO) as well as DC Water's overall strategic plans on innovation, sustainability and policy among others.

In addition to his contributions to the technical advancement of the water resources field, Matt's work has focused on the policy and social components of water treatment and distribution and at DC Water he has been actively implementing such approaches. One such example -ground breaking for water utilities - is ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) reporting.



## **José F. Velazquez, P.E.**

### **Rocky Mountain Water Environment Association**

José Velazquez has over 41 years of experience in the planning, design, and construction of water, wastewater and biosolids systems. He has been involved in all phases of consulting engineering as a design engineer through project and client management, Owner's advisor and as the project principal.

He manages water infrastructure teams, as well as business development efforts, proposal preparation and client relationships. He serves as the biosolids Practice Lead, supporting key solids-related pursuits and projects.

Experienced working in engineering consulting with firms ranging from small, privately held practices to large publicly held companies. He has supported international projects in Canada, Australia, Mexico, and Central Asia. He is also active in the Water Environment Federation (WEF) and Rocky Mountain Water Environment Association and served as the lead editor for the second edition of WEF Manual of Practice 28 – Planning, Design, and implementation of New and Upgraded Water Resource Recovery Facilities.

Mr. Velazquez has provided long-term, ongoing project engineering and management services on as-needed contracts for several clients across the nation. He was involved in the permitting and design of the water treatment systems, treated water distribution systems in multiple locations across the State and nationally.

Mr. Velazquez has served in the role of principal-in-charge, project manager, and project engineer on wastewater projects. He specializes in wastewater collection, pumping, and treatment, and has evaluated pumping facilities, odor containment, and control systems in sewer systems and at treatment facilities. He has provided engineering, master planning, and design services for many collection systems, pumping, and treatment facility projects across the United States.





## **James C. Young**

### **Arkansas Water Environment Association**

Dr. Young, a registered Professional Engineer (Arkansas), is the President of Respirometer Systems and Applications, LLC., and the Principal of JCY Environmental. Prior to his current positions, he was a Research Professor of Environmental Engineering at the University of Arkansas (1997-2010), the Kappe Professor of Environmental Engineering at Penn State University (1991-1996), Professor and Head of Civil Engineering at the University of Arkansas (1982-1991), and an Assistant/Associate/Full Professor at Iowa State University (1968-1982). He received his BS and MS degrees in Civil Engineering from New Mexico State University and a PhD from Stanford University.

His research focuses on the design, operation, and performance of water and wastewater treatment systems and development and evaluation of analytical methods for assessing the effects of pollutants on water quality. He has published more than 150 articles in Journals or Proceedings of technical conferences and received 7 granted US patents.

Dr. Young has produced a great deal of knowledge as well as equipment for the science and art of respirometry. He has held a number of patents and owned several companies that produce this equipment. His equipment has been instrumental for evaluation to determine biological parameters with respect to biodegradability, reaction rates, biomass growth, toxicity, and modeling kinetics, which are keys for design, construction, and operation of wastewater treatment plants. He has authored a book on respirometry, "Respirometry for Environmental Science and Engineering", which is an important textbook for understanding respirometry and how to perform respirometric testing.

He is an active member of the WEF family. He has served on the Honors Committee, on the Industrial Waste Committee (~1975 to 1996), and as WEF's representative to the BOD Committee of Standard Methods (as Chair for 1981 - 2010). Dr. Young has presented at numerous WEF Member Association conferences and has been a prominent WEF Exhibitor Member with his company RSA.

In 1992, Dr. Young received the Willem Rudolfs Medal from WEF for outstanding contributions to industrial waste treatment practice. He was recognized by the Water Pollution Control Association of Pennsylvania with a Research Award in 1993 for outstanding research in the field of water pollution control. He received an Outstanding Paper Award at the Fifth International Symposium on Emerging Technologies in Hazardous Waste Management (1993). In 2015, he received the W. Wesley Eckenfelder Industrial Water Quality Lifetime Achievement Award from WEF.



## **2024 WEF Fellows**

**Paul T. Bowen, Ph.D.**

Georgia Association of Water Professionals, Water Environment Association of South Carolina

**Joseph G. Cleary, P.E., BCEE**

New York Water Environment Association

**Dr. Christian Davies-Venn, Ph.D., P.E., BCEE, BCWRE, F. ASCE**

Chesapeake Water Environment Association, Federal Water Quality Association

**Christine deBarbadillo**

Chesapeake Water Environment Association

**John K. Esler, P.E.**

New England Water Environment Association

**Patricia Kennedy, P.E.**

AZ Water Association

**James S. Kumagai, Ph.D., P.E.**

Hawaii Water Environment Association

**Rebecca Lewis**

Kansas Water Environment Association

**Dave Mason**

Water Environment Association of Texas

**David William Oerke, P.E., BCEE**

Rocky Mountain Water Environment Association

**Dr. Ana J. Peña-Tijerina, P.E., BCEE**

Water Environment Association of Texas

**Joseph C. Reichenberger, P.E., BCEE**

California Water Environment Association

**Matthew Paul Ries, Ph.D., P.E.**

Virginia Water Environment Association

**José F. Velazquez, P.E.**

Rocky Mountain Water Environment Association

**James C. Young**

Arkansas Water Environment Association